

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 2112

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP(KISSINGER, HENRY A.) NO
SUBJ: SECVISIT: BIOGRAPHIC: KING OLAV V

1. OLAV V. 71, HAS BEEN KING OF NORWAY SINCE THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER KING HAAKON VII, IN 1957, THE KING PRESIDES OVER THE CABINET AND IS ALSO TITULAR HEAD OF THE NORWEGIAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERN CHURCH. OLAV HAS LITTLE POLITICAL POWER, BUT HE DOES RETAIN TWO ROYAL PREROGATIVES: AFTER A MINISTERIAL CRISIS HE MAY DEIGNATE PRIME MINISTER, AND UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES HE MAY ASSUME COMMAND OF THE ARMED FORCES. WHATEVER MODEST POLITICAL INFLUENCE HE DOES WIELD STEMS FROM HIS OWN POPULARITY AND PERSONAL PRESTIGE.

2. WELL LIKED AND RESPECTED, OLAV IS A POPULAR MONARCH. HE CARRIES OUT HIS DUTIES SERIOUSLY AND RESPONSIBLY, AND WITHIN THE NARROW LIMITS OF HIS CONSTITUTIONAL PREROGATIVES, HE HAS CHAMPIONED HIS COUNTRY'S DEEP-SEATED LOVE OF DEMOCRATIC FREEDOM. AS CROWN PRINCE, OLAV AND HIS FATHER, KING HAAKON, FLED THE NAZI OCCUPATION IN WW II, SPENDING THE WAR YEARS IN EXILE IN BRITAIN.

3. KING OLAV IS GENUINELY FRIENDLY TOWARD THE UNITED STATES. HE IS KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AMERICAN POLITICS AND THE AMERICAN SCENE AS A WHOLE. HE WAS A FRIEND OF LATE PRESIDENT AND MRS. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
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AND OVER THE YEARS HE MET WITH PRESIDENT TRUMAN,

EISENHOWER, JOHNSON AND NIXON. THE KING TRAVELED THE UNITED STATES IN 1975, ON A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SERIES OF VISITS TO NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EARLIEST ORGANIZED NORWEGIAN IMMIGRATION TO AMERICA.

4. A FRIENDLY , AFFABLE MAN, THE KING HAS A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR. HE IS SOMEWHAT SHY AND DOES NOT CARE MUCH FOR SOCIAL LIFE, BUT HE CAN BE PLEASANTLY INFORMAL. HARD-WORKING AND WELL-INFORMED, HE IS KNOWN FOR HIS DOWN-TO-EARTH SHREWDNESS. THE KING LOVES SPORTS, ESPECIALLY SAILING; HE WON AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL IN THAT EVENT IN 1928. HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH AND SOME FRENCH. A WIDOWER, THE KING HAS THREE GROWN CHILDREN. CONTACT BETWEEN KING OLAV AND RECENT AMERICAN AMBASSADORS HAS BEEN FREQUENT AND CORDIAL.
BREMER

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